



It's All Fake News: Collusion Between Government and Media Dilutes the News Product



Ideally, the relationship between the political class and the media should be an adversarial one. Media, after all, likes to relish its role as “the fourth estate,” the group that exists in order to keep the politicians honest. A proper news media should be skeptical about what politicians tell them and dig for truth in order to tell people what is really going on in Washington, D.C. A metaphorical line should exist between media and politics.

Over the years, however, that line has become blurred to the point where it doesn't really exist anymore. Is a “fourth estate” of any use when, instead of holding politicians' feet to the fire, they instead sit around that fire and roast marshmallows with each other?

When it was announced last week that former White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee-Sanders was joining Fox News as a paid contributor, the same hackneyed joke in different forms was making the rounds in Washington and the media. Basically, stated the joke, “So, how is this different from her former job as press secretary in the Trump White House?”

The satirical news site *The Onion* even posted a headline that read, “Sarah Huckabee Sanders to Join Fox News as a Contributor.” The joke possibly being that sometimes news is even funnier than satire.

But Huckabee-Sanders is far from the only former political official to join the cast of a major news network. In fact, she wasn't the only one that day. Hours after Huckabee-Sanders' deal with Fox was announced, CNN (that paragon of journalistic integrity) announced that it had penned a similar deal with former FBI Deputy Director and virulent Trump critic Andrew McCabe. The fact that McCabe was fired from the FBI for leaking stories to the media apparently doesn't register on the irony meter for the “most trusted name in news.”

That the door swings both ways, with journalists routinely transitioning to politics, is not surprising. In March, the Democrat National Committee (DNC) announced that it would not allow Fox News to host any of its coming debates due to reporting in the *New Yorker* about the role former Fox staffer Bill Shine and his role as Trump administration communications director.

But the DNC's objection to Fox rings hollow when you consider that frontrunner Joe Biden's campaign staff includes CNN contributor Symone Sanders and former NBC News communications director TJ Ducklo. CNN is a regular host of Democrat debates. I guess those cozy relationships don't matter, so long as the politics of the network match the DNC's.

Many people entrusted with giving us opinions on the “news of the day” are former government employees who simply cannot be trusted with giving us opinions on the “news of the day” are former government employees who simply cannot be trusted to do anything but push a narrative. Should networks interview people who work for or once worked for government? Absolutely. Whether the



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 27, 2019

networks should pay former government employees for their opinions is a trickier question.

An early example of the revolving door between politics and the media is former Clinton administration communications director George Stephanopoulos. After his stint in the Clinton White House, Stephanopoulos went to work for ABC News as a political analyst and correspondent. But over the years, Stephanopoulos has morphed out of that sideline role and into the most important face of ABC News. In addition to his roles on the network's *Good Morning America* and the Sunday news roundup *This Week*, Stephanopoulos is now the network's Chief Anchor. While David Muir mans the slot as the anchor of the network's evening news, Stephanopoulos is the person ABC most trusts to give the public the actual story on events of the day.

While the switch from politics to media *almost* makes sense for Huckabee-Sanders and Stephanopoulos, who were both involved in the communications aspect of politics, one place it should *never* make sense is in the national security area. Amazingly, even that is occurring. Former CIA Director John Brennan, who had access to national secrets we can only imagine, is now a paid employee of NBC and MSNBC. James Clapper, a former Director of National Intelligence under Barack Obama, is now a paid employee of CNN. People such as Brennan and Clapper should be nowhere near any news product as analysts, commentators, or (especially) sources.

We no longer receive unfiltered news and, perhaps, we never really did. For instance, many believe the Yellow Journalism of William Randolph Hearst was the cause of the Spanish-American War. Fake news is a problem that dates back further than our founding as a nation. In 1798, John Adams wrote, "There has been more new error propagated by the press in the last ten years than in a hundred years before 1798."

In 2019, nearly all mainstream news is Fake News. The revolving door between government and the news media (on all sides) is proof of that. It's too bad, because we could really use some unfiltered news these days.

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